WHY'D I
WAKE UP SO EARLY..
WHAT TIME IS IT..?
IT'S STILL
WAY TOO EARLY~
I CAN SLEEP SOME
MORE..
04:44
45

THE FOLLOWING IS A WORK OF FICTION.

THIS WORK CONTAINS SCENES WHICH MAY BE DISTURBING FOR SOME READERS, SO THOSE WITH WEAK HEARTS ARE ADVISED NOT TO READ ON.

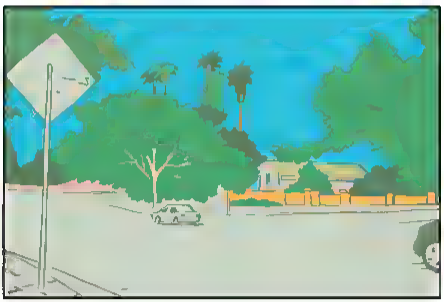
BUT IF IT KEEPS HAPPENING,
IT STARTS TO SEEM

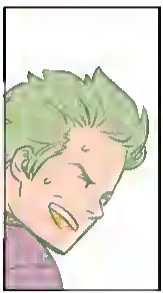
INEVITABLE.

THIS TIME. COULD IT BE.
MY SUBCONSCIOUS TRYING
TO TELL ME SOMETHING..

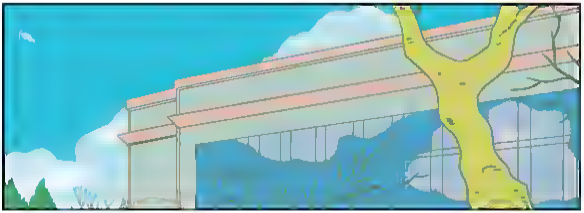
WE START TO WONDER WHAT IF SOMETHING
TRIES TO REMIND US WHAT WE'VE FORGOTTEN.

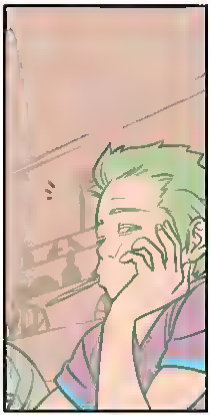
CRAP, I'M LATE!





EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE SIMILAR EXPERIENCE LIKE ME.





LOOKING AT THE CLOCK
AND ALL OF THE SUDDEN,
THE NUMBERS WERE
THE SAME.

OF COURSE,
WE FIGURE IT'S
JUST A COINCIDENCE

THE VAULT OF HORROR:
A COLLECTION OF NIGHTMARES

04:44

STORY/ ART: YOONJIN CHOI

OKAY~
SLOSH
STRAWBERRY
PUT SOME WATER IN THIS SACRED CUP
AND POUR SOME ON THE TREE'S EYE. LIKE THIS. SO IT SPILLS OUT A BIT.
THEN THE SACRED WATER IS FILLED WITH THE TREE'S SPIRIT.

THEN,
ALL YOU HAVE
TO DO IS COLLECT THE
WATER AGAIN.
STRAWBERRY

NOW
DRINK THIS
HUH?!
99

ME FIRST?
YEAH, COME ON~
ARE YOU SCARED? HAHA
N-NO.. IT'S NOT THAT
HERE GOES NOTHING
GULP
WOW~
.....
WHAT'S IT TASTE LIKE?
WELL..
NOT VERY DIFFERENT..
IT'S JUST TAP WATER. WHY WOULD THE TASTE CHANGE?

I'M GONNA MAKE SOME MORE~
BYE~
SEE YOU TOMORROW~
WHY DO WE ALWAYS COME HERE? IT'S SCARY WHEN IT GETS DARK.
BECAUSE THE TREES HERE ARE PRETTY~
DON'T YOU THINK THEY LOOK LIKE PEOPLE?

YOU KNOW WHAT?
...THAT'S WHAT CREEPS ME OUT.
ALL OF THE TREES HERE ARE ACTUALLY ELVES
WHAT?
AT NIGHT, THEY TRANSFORM INTO ELVES AND WANDER AROUND.
TREES WITH ONLY ONE EYE ARE ONES WHERE THE ELF COULDN'T FIND ITS WAY BACK
SO THEY SAY THAT IF YOU POUR HOLY WATER ON THAT SPOT AND DRINK IT, YOU CAN TURN INTO AN ELF.
WHAT?! REALLY? I'VE NEVER HEARD THAT LEGEND BEFORE.
NOPE. I JUST MADE THAT UP HAHAHA

HMPH...

AND WHY DD WE ALWAYS MEET AT 4:44?

SOMETHING FEELS WEIRD ABDUT THAT NUMBER..

THAT MAKES IT EASIER TD REMEMBER!

I MADE A MARK DN THAT TREE SD WE CDULD REMEMBER IT AS OURS~ TRY AND FIND IT LATER~

IT WAS THE FIRST TIME

THAT I HAD A CRUSH ON SOMEONE.

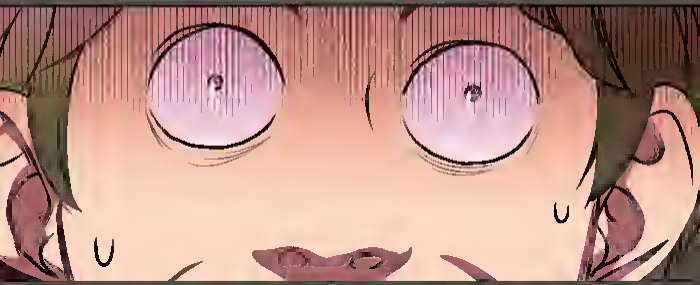
?
TURN

HEY..
BY THE WAY
ABOUT ME GOING TO THE STATES..
IF I TALK TO MY MOM
I MIGHT NOT HAVE TO GO..
SO.. UM.. I...

WHAT I'M SAYING IS..

THAT DAY WAS ALSO THE FIRST TIME

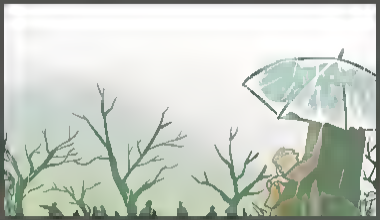
I WAS ABLE TO SEE HUMAN EATEN BY TREE.



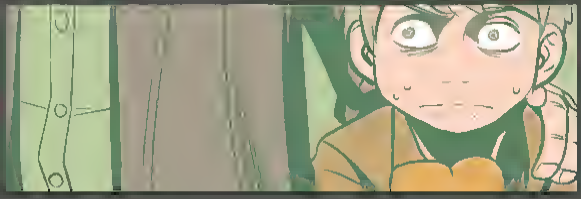
.....

UH.. AHHH
STEP
STEP
AAAHHH!!!!
HELP!!!
STEP
STEP

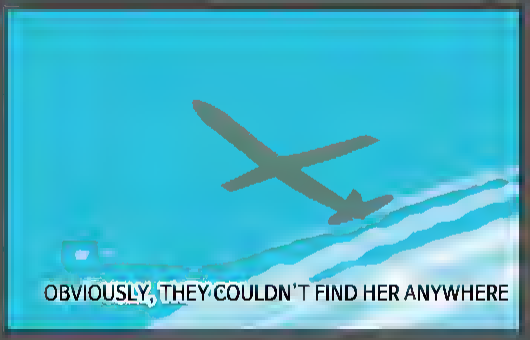
A COUPLE OF DAYS LATER, THE POLICE AND THE LOCALS WERE TRY TO FIND HER



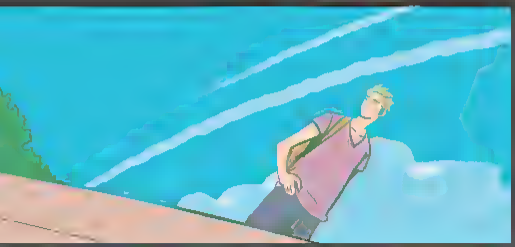
I JUST WATCHED THEM FOR A FEW WEEKS WITHOUT SAYING A WORD



AT THAT TIME, I WAS ALREADY QUITE SURE TO KNOW THAT THE WORLD WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME IF I SAID SOMETHING LIKE "SHE GOT EATEN BY A TREE."



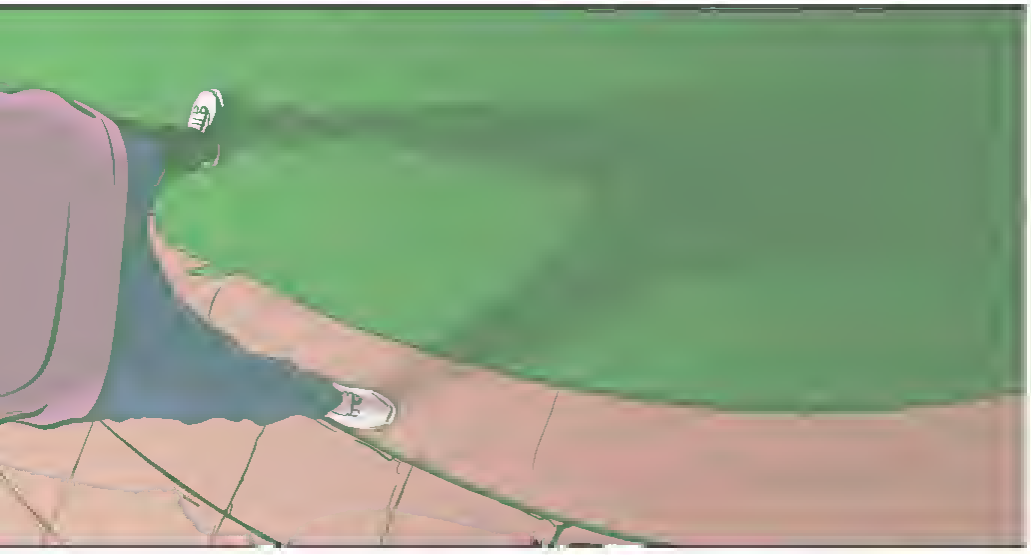
AND I MOV[illegible] PARENTS WANTED

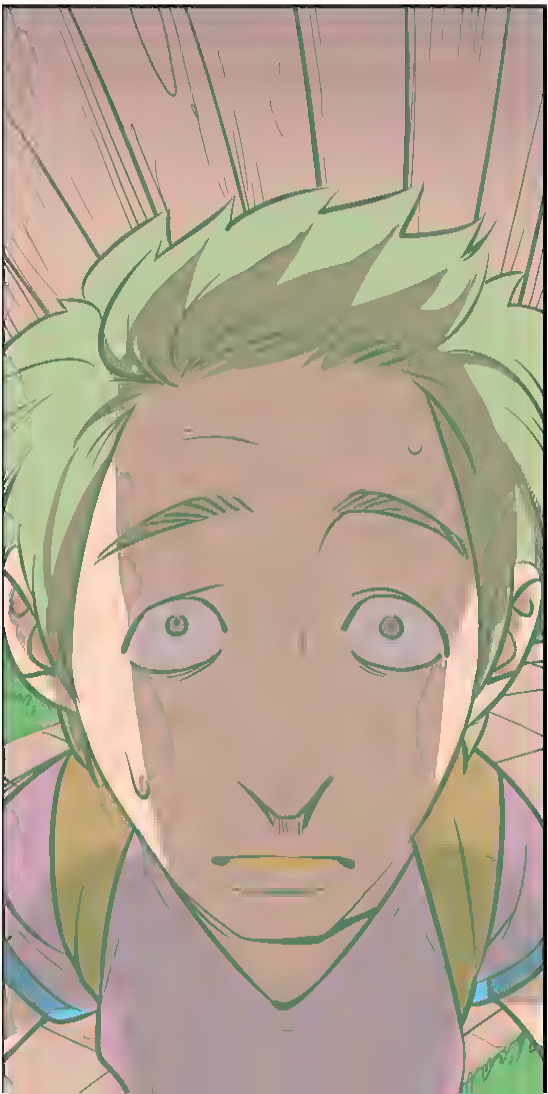


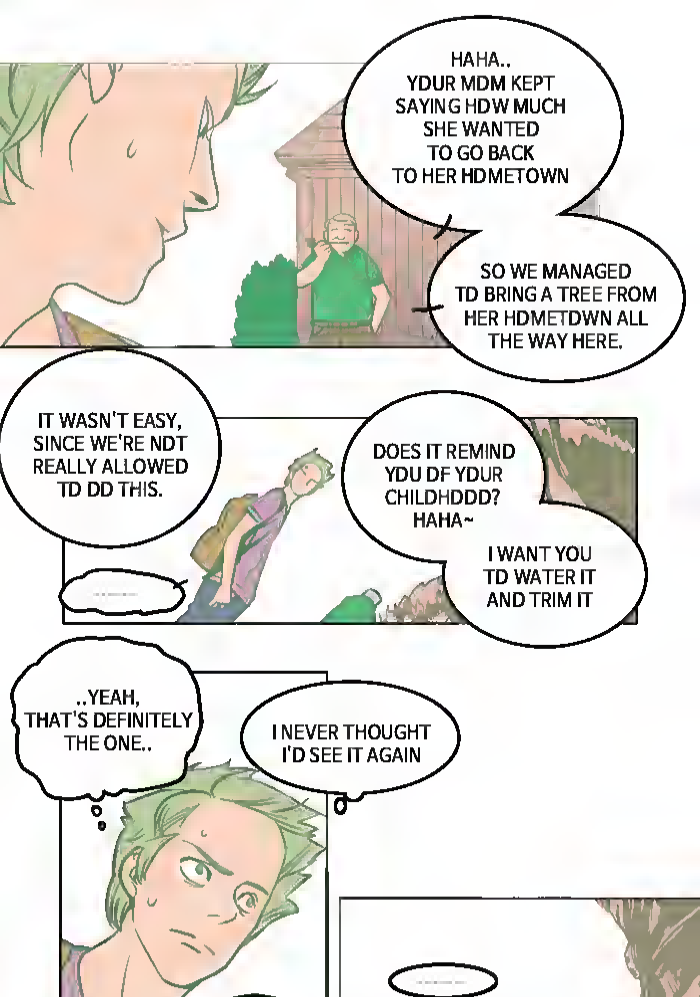
NOW,
THAT GIRL WHOSE NAME
I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER...

HAS BEEN BURIED IN
MY PAST AS MY FIRST
CHILDHOOD LOVE.

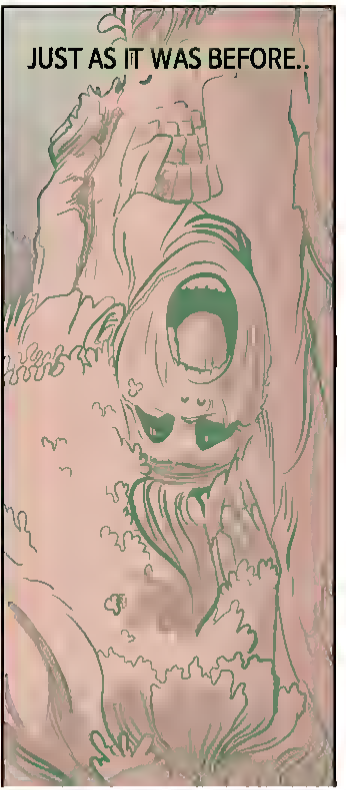
GOODBYE...
MY FIRST LOVE..






HAHA..
YDUR MDM KEPT
SAYING HDW MUCH
SHE WANTED
TO GO BACK
TO HER HDMETOWN
SO WE MANAGED
TD BRING A TREE FROM
HER HDMETDWN ALL
THE WAY HERE.
IT WASN'T EASY,
SINCE WE'RE NDT
REALLY ALLOWED
TD DD THIS.
DOES IT REMIND
YDU DF YDUR
CHILDHDDD?
HAHA~
I WANT YOU
TD WATER IT
AND TRIM IT
..YEAH,
THAT'S DEFINITELY
THE ONE..
I NEVER THOUGHT
I'D SEE IT AGAIN
..WHAT
SHOULD I DO
I GUESS IT SHOULD BE FINE

THAT'S THE TREE FROM BEFORE
...W-WHAT THE HELL??

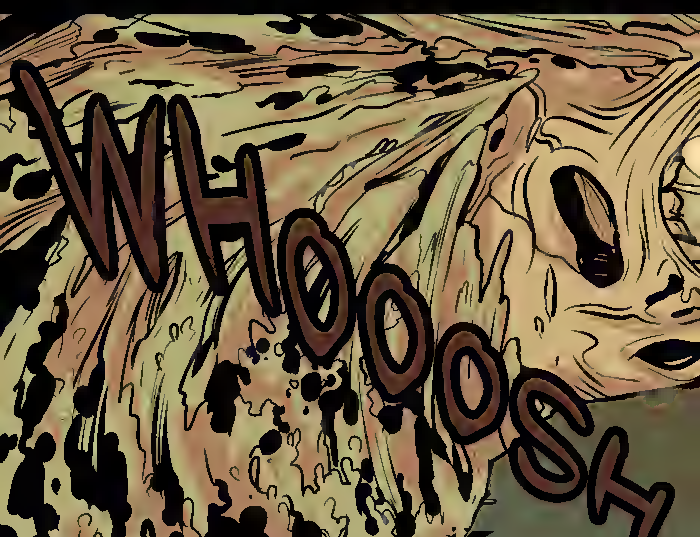


THE WAY IT LOOKED RIGHT AFTER IT ATE HER..

AND THAT NIGHT

....W-WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT FROM ME!!

WHAT DO I WANT?
HOW CAN YOU TALK TO ME LIKE THAT
WHAT DO YOU MEAN


WHOOOOSH

HHSSS

I'VE BEEN WAITING
FOR YOU TO COME BACK
EVERY DAY, AT 4:44
YOU PROMISED ME
I WAITED FOR YOU, FOR DAYS, MONTHS.. EVEN YEARS.
I WAS SO COLD AND LONELY.. DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I WAS UPSET?
SQUIRM

BUT I'M SO HAPPY TO SEE YOU AGAIN..
SQUIRM
YOU'LL STAY WITH ME FROM NOW ON.. RIGHT?
EVERY DAY AT 4:44...
W-W-WAIT A MINUTE!!!
NOT YET!!!

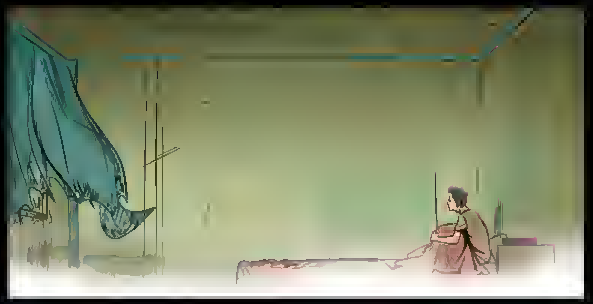
LOOK.
YOU PROBABLY
DON'T KNOW
BUT YOU'RE NOT
IN KOREA RIGHT NOW
IT'S DIFFERENT
FROM KOREAN
TIME!
SO IT'S NOT
OUR MEETING
TIME YET.
HOW ABOUT WE MEET
A LITTLE BIT LATER?
HM? OKAY?!
MAN..
I DON'T EVEN
BELIEVE MYSELF..
SO.. JUST WAIT A BIT
ALRIGHT
AGH!!

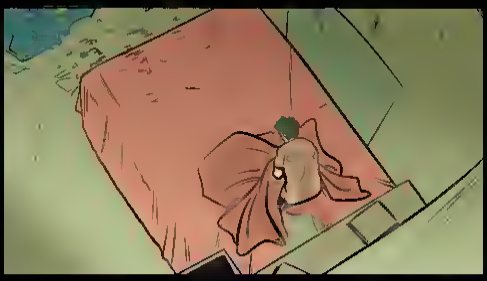
WHAT?
I'VE ALREADY WAITED SO LONG
I THINK I CAN WAIT A LITTLE LONGER

AS LONG AS I GET TO MEET YOU

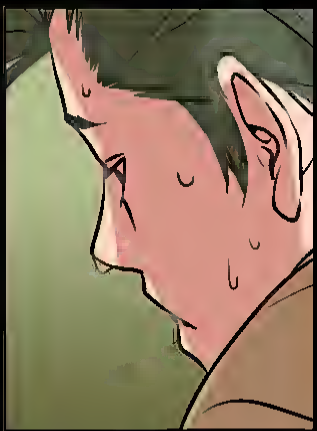
.....

SEE YOU IN A LITTLE BIT

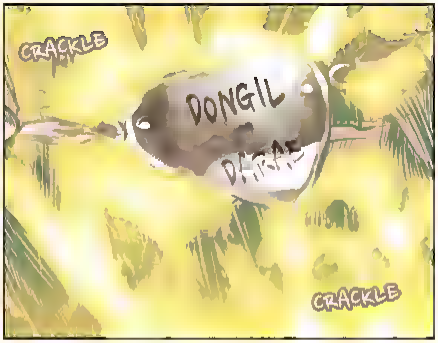




I TRIED TO FORGET ABOUT YOU..

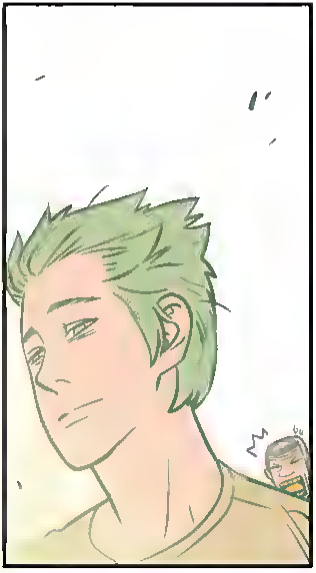


BUT YOU'D BEEN WAITING FOR ME THE WHOLE TIME..



NOW IT'S REALLY GOODBYE..

MY FIRST LOVE



THE END